

Two collections of rhinoceros plates compiled by James Douglas and James Parsons in the eighteenth century

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INTRODUCTION

Some years ago two bound volumes with rhinoceros drawings and engravings, dating from the second quarter of the 18th century, were discovered in the Hunterian Library of the University of Glasgow. The first (shelf-mark Av. 1.17) compiled by the London doctor James Douglas (Baads 1675–1742 London) is cited hereafter as the Douglas Collection or DC. The other (shelf-mark At. 1.15) was compiled by James Parsons (Barnstaple 1705–1770 London) and may be called the Parsons Collection or PC. The history and contents of these two collections are discussed below.

In June 1739 an Indian rhinoceros arrived in England and was for some time exhibited to the public in London. This must have provided a stimulus to Douglas to collect more information about the animal. His enthusiasm influenced his assistant Parsons who took over from Douglas the idea of compiling a collection of rhinoceros plates. The collections in the present form are quite unique. No other early attempts to gather figures of one animal species are known.

DOUGLAS AND THE DOUGLAS COLLECTION

James Douglas had wide interests including phonetics, Horace, botany, and zoology. His work on the frog, armadillo, elephant, and flamingo has earlier been discussed (Thomas, 1960, 1964; Brock, 1975:4). His curiosity was again roused when, from June 1739 onwards, a rhinoceros was exhibited in Eagle Street (London), near his house in Red Lyon Square.

Douglas may have intended to write a monograph on the rhinoceros (Parsons, 1743: 527) but this was prevented by his death on 1 April 1742. In 1739 he asked James Parsons, at that time employed as his scientific assistant and anatomical draughtsman, to make some drawings of the rhinoceros then shown in London (these are now in the DC). Douglas possibly wanted to use the best of these as illustrations in his proposed publication.

Although Douglas never published anything about the rhinoceros, he did collect a number of plates depicting that animal, now forming the nucleus of DC. He also lectured on the subject to the Royal Society of London, on 21 June 1739.¹ In that meeting he ‘communicated a Draught and Description of the young Rhinoceros lately brought over from Bengal, which was read. Wherein he gives first an account of the dimensions he carefully took of the Body and several parts of it; being about 4½ high, and 7½ feet about: and then describes the skin and several Plicae in it: and then compares the description made in Gesner from Albert Durer & also other authors, and shews in what particulars they seem to disagree with that which was made with great care of this’ (Journal Book of the Royal Society, XVI, 453–454; cf. Parsons, 1743: 527).

In August 1741 William Hunter (1718–1783) entered Douglas's household, to assist Douglas and to tutor his son William George (*ca* 1725–1755) who studied medicine (Thomas, 1964: 16). Hunter stayed in the house after his patron's death, until 1749. As Thomas (1964: xiii–xiv) wrote, 'On Douglas's death it was natural that his unpublished documents should pass into the hands of his pupil [William Hunter]' Among these documents must have been the DC.

William Hunter himself never used the Collection. However, he added a few plates to it and we probably owe it to him that all Douglas's material on the rhinoceros was collected in this single bound volume. In a letter to Petrus Camper at Groningen, Hunter wrote: 'Since writing as above, Dr Kooystra's stay has given me time to do something for you about the rhinoceros: you will be so good as to return the Dr Douglas's collection of Drawings and Prints when you have made the proper use of them: because I wish to keep every work of his' (letter in University Library, Amsterdam, sign.X 78). Unfortunately, this letter is without a date. Johannes Kooystra, one of Camper's pupils, went to London in 1771 or early 1772 (Visser, *in litt.*). We may assume that Camper received the DC in 1772–73. Although he discusses several rhinoceros depictions in his publications on the African rhinoceros (1780, 1782), it is nowhere stated explicitly that he used or saw the DC. Moreover, none of the illustrations he mentions suggest this. Camper, however, did not forget Hunter's request to return the collection since he wrote to him, on 8 November 1774: 'I forgot this natural history of the Rhinoceros, which was lost among other papers on the same subject.' It was returned by 'Mr Benedese, an Hungarian gentleman, which I take the liberty to recommend to you to see your beautiful Cabinet' (letter in the Wellcome Institute, London).

Hunter died in 1783 and bequeathed his collections (including the DC and, as we shall see, the PC) to his nephew Matthew Baillie (Simmons, 1783: 65, Kerr, 1957). After Baillie waived his rights, the collection was transported by sea to Glasgow in 1807 to be stored in a new building erected in the college grounds of Glasgow University (Kerr, 1957; Thomas, 1964: xiv). At present the DC is in the Hunterian library, Glasgow.

PARSONS AND THE PARSONS COLLECTION

In 1739 James Parsons² made, at the instigation of Douglas, several drawings of the rhinoceros in London. After that, he probably did not work on the rhinoceros until the death of Douglas. At that time he began to collect information about the animal and illustrations that others before him had made of it (now the PC). Why Parsons found it necessary to duplicate Douglas's work, is unknown. However, many plates in his collection are provided with notes on their provenance and aesthetic value.

On 9 June 1743 Parsons read a paper on the natural history of the rhinoceros at a meeting of the Royal Society. On that occasion he referred to his collection of plates, stating that differences between other rhinoceros illustrations 'will fully appear in viewing the collection I have the honour to lay before you' (Parsons, 1743: 524). His paper was printed in the *Philosophical Transactions* of 1743 and three plates, based on drawings made earlier, were added (see below).

The PC is presently in the Hunterian library in Glasgow but it is not known how and when William Hunter came to possess it. It is not mentioned in the correspondence of 1772–73 between Hunter and Camper discussed above. Parsons's library was sold by Mr Paterson on 7 June 1769, apparently anonymously (Nicholls, 1812: 489). In spite of much

effort I have not been able to locate a copy of a possible sale catalogue. It cannot, therefore, be decided whether the PC was sold at that occasion, or if it went to Parsons's wife (Elizabeth, née Reynolds) after his death in 1770, or if he had parted with it earlier. The means by which Hunter's private collection became the Hunterian library has been discussed above.

The paper about the rhinoceros by Parsons appeared in 1743 and contained one of the first good descriptions of the animal. De Mours translated it into French (Parsons, 1760)³ and a German translation was published in 1747 in Nüremberg (Parsons, 1747), no doubt stimulated by the exhibition of another rhinoceros (the female of 1741) in Germany since 1746. This article had some influence and the plates were copied several times. Shaw (1746: i, 91) used the front view in an initial letter. The two views of plate 2 were used in two coloured plates by Meijer (1756, pls. 29–30; cf. Rookmaaker, 1973: 50).⁴

Later, Parsons (1766) wrote another short paper about the double horns of the rhinoceros providing proof, according to him for the first time, that a bicorned species occurred in Africa and that the Asian ones had but one horn. In 1768 'H.D.' attacked him in the *Gentleman's Magazine* saying that the Romans (Pausanias, Martial) already knew about the two-horned kind. Parsons's (1768) retort in the same magazine a month later, was that this was true but many authors had corrupted Martial's text because *they* did not know about the existence of such a beast. Curiously, H.D. referred only to the paper of 1743, apparently in ignorance of the 1766 one.

Parsons also made, between 1739 and 1743, two paintings showing a side-view of the rhinoceros. One of these he presented to Richard Mead (Parsons, 1743: 528), the other he kept himself. The first does not appear in the sale catalogue of Mead's collection of 1754 and its present location is uncertain. In 1781, the second painting was still in the hands of Parsons's widow, who died on 8 August 1786 (Nicholls, 1812: 476n, 487), but it is not known where the painting went to then. When I visited the British Museum (Natural History) in July 1975, I was most surprised to find there, on the wall of the Mammal Section, one of Parsons's paintings. It had been in a store-room for some time and its state of preservation was rather bad; there are several small holes in the canvas.

CONTENTS OF THE DC AND PC

Both DC and PC contain seemingly arbitrary examples of the major currents in western rhinoceros iconography. Only a very short sketch of each is given here. Every plate found in the collections has been briefly described, while references to further literature are provided where possible (but not exhaustively).

In the DC the right-hand pages are numbered 1 to 45, except a folder entitled 'Rhinoceros. Sketches from Wandelaar, with Dr Douglas's account of them. From Dr Hunter's museum', which precedes p.1 (thus: p.1a). Reference to a plate in the DC has been made at the end of each entry as DC 1, DC 2, etc. Some pages contain more than one illustration.

The pages of the PC, which bears the formal title 'Different prints of the rhinoceros', are unnumbered. Both left-hand and right-hand pages were used, but not consistently. I have numbered all pages on which a plate or a remark was found (1 to 24). These numbers are cited at the end of each entry here as PC 1, PC 2, etc., the L after some numbers indicating that it is a left-hand page. Many figures in the PC have handwritten remarks added to them by Parsons.

1 The rhinoceros in classical Rome

Rhinoceroses were frequently seen in the Roman circus but never in great numbers at the same time (Gowers, 1950; Jennison, 1937; Keller, 1909; Toynbee, 1973). The two-horned specimens belonged, in all probability, to the northern white rhinoceros, *Ceratotherium simum cottoni*, as was pointed out by Trouessart (1909) and Gowers (1950). Doubtless, however, there were also some one-horned specimens, *Rhinoceros unicornis*.

- 1.1 Coins dating from the reign of Domitian (52–96) showing a two-horned rhinoceros. The DC has two tracings of them. One is ‘Dr Hunter’s medal’ (figured by Camper, 1782, pl.3. fig.4), the other is copied from Augustin (1587, pl.63). (DC 25, PC 24).
- 1.2 Drawing of the two-horned “PINOKEPOC” in the Nile mosaic in the Palestrina museum, probably made during the reign of Sulla (138–78 BC) for the Fortuna temple. (DC 25, PC 4) Lit.: Toynbee, 1973: 126, pl.51.
- 1.3 Tracings of three coins showing some kind of pig. The same coins were illustrated in Freytag (1747: 26–27, figure on p.3) who stated that the two golden coins came from the ‘cimeliarchium Pembrokianum’, and the silver one from the numophylacium of Andr. Fontaine. He objected to Spanheim (1671: 137), who had claimed that Domitian’s rhinoceros had only one horn and had illustrated his account with a coin of a one-horned rhinoceros from Domitian’s times, unlike all the others known today. Freytag only saw the normal Domitian coins with the two-horned species. Why Freytag pictured the pig coins in his dissertation on the rhinoceros is an enigma. (DC 25)
- 1.4 Drawing by Parsons showing an animal standing with all four feet in water. It has two horns on the nose and is probably meant to be a rhinoceros. The source is unknown but Parsons’s notes under the drawing may be helpful: ‘Our worthy President Martin Folkes Esq.r in his Museum has, three large prints taken from Antique Paintings of several kinds of Animals, to the first of which this general title is prefixed, viz. Ex veteri *Hypocausto repesto prope vivarium An. 1547. in quo elegantissime omnium animalium picto effigies videbantur.* – Hoc tabulo tracto sint in tres tabellas Digesto. *Formis Ant: Lafresii.* The above Figure is among those in the second plate (being exactly copy’d by me) to bring into this collection; and the inscription as follows: “*Tab.ii. Animalium ex vetustissimis picturis Romo tractorum. formis Ant: Lafresii.*” (PC 3)

2 The Dürer rhinoceros of 1515

In 1515 an Indian rhinoceros arrived in Lisbon. It fought with an elephant, was to be presented to Pope Leo X but drowned on the coast of Genoa during its transport to Rome. Its history has been recounted by Costa (1937), Rookmaaker (1973), and Clarke (1973). In 1515 Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) made a drawing and a woodcut depicting this rhinoceros. The woodcut was later copied time and again over the next three centuries, both in literature and in various art forms. The “Dürer-hornlet” on the shoulders is usually diagnostic of the Dürer source.

- 2.1 Dürer’s woodcut of 1515. Copy of the edition published by Hendrick Hondius at The Hague, Holland, in ca 1620. The Dutch text (6½ lines) has 1515 instead of 1513 which appears on the earlier German states. A novelty here is the statement that the

rhinoceros was presented to the German emperor Maximilianus (not to Pope Leo X). This cannot be correct. (PC 1)

Lit.: Hausmann, 1922: 81, no.7; Parsons, 1743: 526;

F. W. H. Hollstein, *German engravings, etchings and woodcuts*, 7, no.273 f.

- 2.2 Dürer's woodcut of 1515. Possibly another copy of the Hondius-edition, because the crack in the wood block extends across the hind legs. Its preservation is bad (there are several holes in it) and it is without any text – which makes identification difficult. (DC 34)
- 2.3 Woodcut closely copied from Dürer. Above the rhinoceros which faces left, the title is written: 'The rhinoceros.' The caption in English (5 lines) repeats e.g. the story about the enmity between elephant and rhinoceros. It ends, 'Sold at the White House without Newgate.' Parsons (in the PC) states: 'the Print publish'd immediately upon the arrival of the Rhinoceros in 1739, by Overton without Newgate.' (DC 38, 42, PC 10)
- 2.4 The armorial bearings of the Society of Apothecaries. On both sides the arms are flanked by a unicorn while the crest shows a simple version of Dürer's rhinoceros. It was designed by William Camden (1551–1623) and used since 1617. (DC 31 (2x), PC 2 L)
Lit.: Dickinson, 1929; Cole, 1952: 346, fig.12; Shepard, 1967: 122; Clarke, 1973: 13, note 18.
- 2.5 Topsell, 1658: 595 (also in first edition of 1607), woodcut. Rhinoceros copied from Gessner (1620: 843) who mentions Dürer as his source. (DC 33)
- 2.6 Valerianus, 1631: 26 (also in first edition of 1556), Dürer rhinoceros tossing a bear. It is not known which edition of the book was used by Douglas. (DC 25)
Lit.: Cole, 1953: 341, fig.6.
- 2.7 Nieuwhof, 1693: 151, engraving.⁵ The rhinoceros is on the left side of the plate and faces right. Above it we read 'Reinoceros' which is the only text on the plate. (PC 6)
- 2.8 Leguat, 1708, pl. opposite p.146, engraving showing five different rhinoceroses all vaguely based on Dürer but only three show the Dürer-hornlet. Parsons copied four of them for his collection. One rhinoceros was taken from Thevet (1557: 41)⁶, the source of the others is not known. All five were again used in the frontispiece of Valentini (1714). (PC 9)
Lit.: Cole, 1953: 350; Sody, 1959, pl.6.
- 2.9 Engraving by Francis Barlow of a Dürer-rhinoceros attacking an elephant. The rhinoceros is on the left side of the plate. The caption (2½ lines) begins: 'A true representation of the two great masterpieces of nature, the Elephant and the Rhinoceros, drawne after the life, lately brought over from the East Indies to London. ...' and 'F. Barlow delin: I. Griffier fec: P. Tempest excud:'. This engraving is the reverse of an earlier drawing by Barlow in the Courtauld Institute, London. (DC 41)
Lit.: Rookmaaker, 1976: 89.
- 2.10 Small engraving showing Barlow's rhinoceros (which is after Dürer) without the elephant. It faces right. 'Rhinoceros' is written beneath its belly. (PC 7)
- 2.11 A plate entitled 'ASIA. The Rhinoceros surprisingly cloath'd all over with a natural armour, the Bufler larger than our ox, Jackal, Beaver, Tatus, Porcupine, Civet Cat,

Ape, &c. Also great variety of serpents & curious Birds abound in this Region.' The rhinoceros is copied from Barlow but has a more prominent Dürer-horn. The animal stands on the left facing right. Parsons (in the PC) writes that the plate was published in John Ogilby's *Travels*, but no book with that title could be located. The plate does not appear in *Asia, the first part...*, London, 1673, by Ogilby. (DC 40, PC 22 (half only))

- 2.12 Engraving by Jean-Baptiste Henri Bonnart (1678–1726) depicting a fight between an elephant (left) and a Dürer-rhinoceros (right). Bonnart copied the plate, in reverse, from Tempesta (1650). Parsons (in the PC) remarks: 'He has so altered the Beast as to give him the feet of a bull & the pizzle; and the tail like a horse, but the ornaments are like those of Alb: Dür:.' Indeed, it is no more than a caricature of Dürer's woodcut. (PC 5)

The sources of the following examples (2.13–2.16) are unknown to me. This is hardly surprising considering the frequency with which the Dürer-rhinoceros was used, often in places where it is not expected.

- 2.13 Engraving showing a Dürer-rhinoceros with a long and straight Dürer-hornlet. It was made 'when the Rhinoceros was brought over in 1685' (Parsons in PC). (PC 8)
- 2.14 Large engraving with a harnessed Dürer-rhinoceros. (PC 12)
- 2.15 Engraving depicting a Dürer-rhinoceros with an enormous Dürer-hornlet, facing right. Made by Martin Engelbrecht (Augsburg, ca 1710–1730). (DC 28, PC 19)
- 2.16 'The Rhinoceros or One Horn.' Small engraving with a rhinoceros based on Dürer but without the hornlet. (DC 28)

3 The rhinoceros by Galle (1586)

A second iconographical trend is based on an engraving by Philippe Galle (1537–1612), made at Antwerp in 1586 after a sketch of the rhinoceros that could be seen in Madrid in those days (figured by Clarke, 1974, fig.3; 1975a). A drawing closely resembling Galle's engraving is in the *Tierbuch* ("Theatrum Naturae") compiled in 1615 by Lazarus Roeting, now in the library of the Zoological Museum, Berlin (Jahn, 1970). The texts of engraving and drawing are similar, but the latter adds 'ad vivum depingendam'. Whether this drawing in fact was the original that Galle copied, needs further substantiation.

Galle's figure has been more often copied than is usually realised. The peculiar shape of the middle shield's lower side helps identification. Lach (1970:169) summarized the history of this rhinoceros, which arrived at Lisbon in 1579 and later went to Madrid.

- 3.1 Camerarius 1595, pls.4, 5. Two emblemata (one showing the rhinoceros tossing a bear), made by Hans Sibmacher. (DC 25, PC 23)
Lit.: figured in Clarke, 1974, figs.4–5; Cole, 1953, fig.10; Lach, 1970, pl.129; Rookmaaker, 1973, fig.4.
- 3.2 Engraving by Adriaen Collaert (ca 1560–1618), the son-in-law of Philippe Galle. From his *Animalium quadrupedum omnis generis verae et artificiosissimae delineationes*, ca 1612. The rhinoceros has an elephant on both sides, one of which entwines a palm-tree.

- a. With an elaborate hunting-scene in the background. Rhinoceros faces left. Coloured. (PC 18 L)
Lit.: Clarke, 1975b, fig.69: Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts, c. 1450–1700*, 4: 596–615; cat. *Het dier in de prentkunst XVe–XVIII eeuw*, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1974: 19 (no.47a).
 - b. Same engraving in reverse, without the hunt in the background. Possibly by N. Visscher, but unsigned (cf. Hollstein, *loc. cit.*). (DC 27)
- 3.3 ‘A Rhinoceros’, a tiny engraving of unknown origin with a Galle-rhinoceros, which faces left. (PC 23)
- 3.4–5 Two small and badly executed figures. The shape of the rhinoceroses vaguely resembles Galle’s beast. Source unknown. (DC 27 and PC 23)
- 3.6 Drawing by Parsons, ‘taken from a Spanish author.’ It is a primitive representation of a rhinoceros with one long horn. Source unknown. Possibly it shows the rhinoceros that came to Lisbon in 1579. (PC 11)

4 The rhinoceros of 1684

During the second half of 1684 an Indian rhinoceros was brought to London from Bengal. It remained in England until 1686 when it must have died (Clarke, 1974:114; Gowers, 1952:288).

- 4.1 Engraving with a rhinoceros facing left. It still has many Dürer-traits but the typical hornlet has disappeared and the animal has a ring through its nose. This plate, probably made and sold in 1684, bears a superscript which is very instructive concerning the early history of this specimen: ‘A true and lively representation of that prodigious & wonderful creature the Rhinoceros, lately brought over from the East Indies in the year 1684, from the Court of the King of Gulkindall, by, Captain Udall Commander of the Herbert ship; and afterwards sold in London for two thousand three hundred and twenty pounds sterling ...’. ‘Sold by I. Oliver on Ludgate Hill over against the Old Baily.’ The 1684 auction, where the beast was bought by a Mr Langley for £2,320, is confirmed by Newdigate-Newdegate (1901:246). (DC 39)
- 4.2 Engraving entitled ‘The Exact Draught of that famous beast the Rhinoceros that latley came.’ A primitive representation of a rhinoceros. It has a ring through its nose to which a chain is attached, held by a Moor. Probably after life, though badly. This is the only figure taken from the 1684 rhinoceros. (DC 35, 36, 37, PC 13)
Lit.: Clarke, 1976, fig.35.

5 The rhinoceros of 1739

On 1 June 1739 a rhinoceros arrived in London from Bengal. It was then three years old, but it is unknown how long it lived (Parsons, 1743: 527, 528; Clarke, 1974: 115–6; Rookmaaker, 1973: 46).

A. The Parsons Drawings

The drawings that Douglas asked Parsons to make of this rhinoceros are now in the DC. All are done in red chalk, except two which are in pencil (5.7 and 5.10). Normally at least two

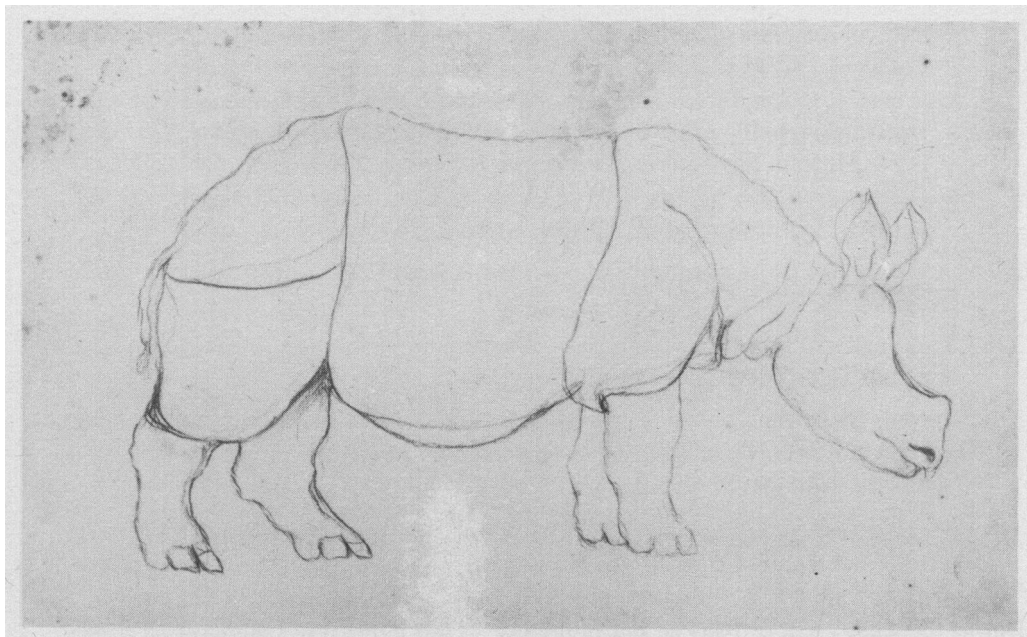


Figure 1. Sketch of the rhinoceros in London in 1739 by James Parsons (5.1.).

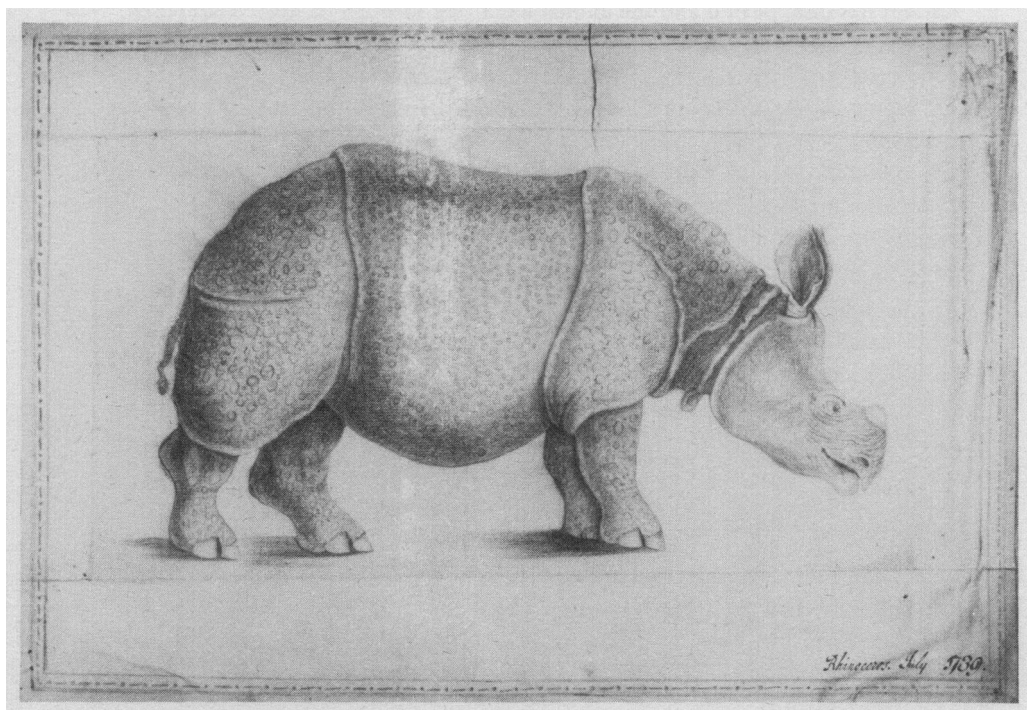


Figure 2. Red chalk drawing by James Parsons (5.2.) based on the sketch shown in Figure 1.

states are available for each position of the animal, the first a rough sketch, often only showing the rhinoceros's outline, the second a more finished product.

- 5.1 Side-view, outline only (fig. 1). Rhinoceros faces right. Both ears shown, fore-legs together. Study for 5.2 and 5.3. (DC 7)
- 5.2 Finished side-view (fig. 2). Rhinoceros faces right, left ear covered by right one, fore-legs together. Inscription in lower right-hand corner: 'Rhinoceros, July 1739'. (DC 2)
- 5.3 Finished side-view⁷, similar to 5.2, but without inscription. Fore-legs apart. (DC 1)
- 5.4 Recumbent rhinoceros, outline only. (DC 8)
- 5.5 Half side/front view, outline only. (DC 6)
- 5.6 Front view, unfinished. Both ears standing upright. (DC 10)
- 5.7 Front view, outline only (fig. 3). In pencil. Hind legs largely covered by front ones. Left ear hanging down. (DC 9)
- 5.8 Front view, finished drawing (fig. 4). Hind-legs invisible. Left ear hanging down. The left ear was injured during the sea voyage (cf. 5.19). Only in these last two instances does Parsons show this damage. (DC 3)
- 5.9 Hind-view, outline only. Similar to 5.10 but the head is drawn in three different positions. The penis is shown. In right-hand corner the words 'heels, ears' are written indicating that the artist thought those parts to be in need of more attention. (DC 5)

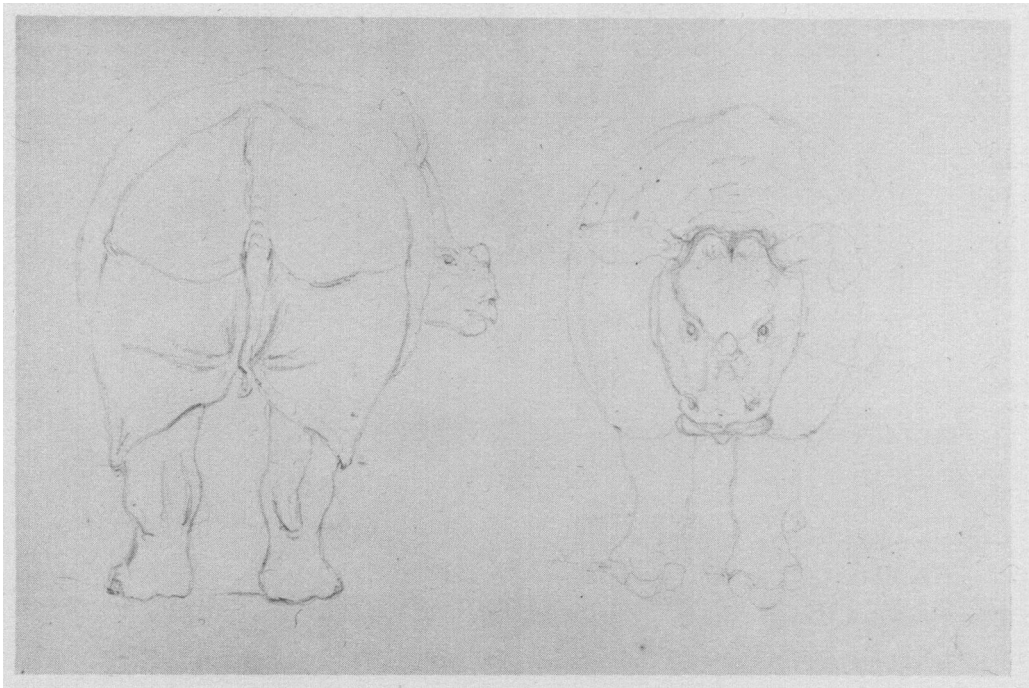


Figure 3. Two different views of the London-rhinoceros, sketched in pencil by Parsons (5.7. and 5.10.).

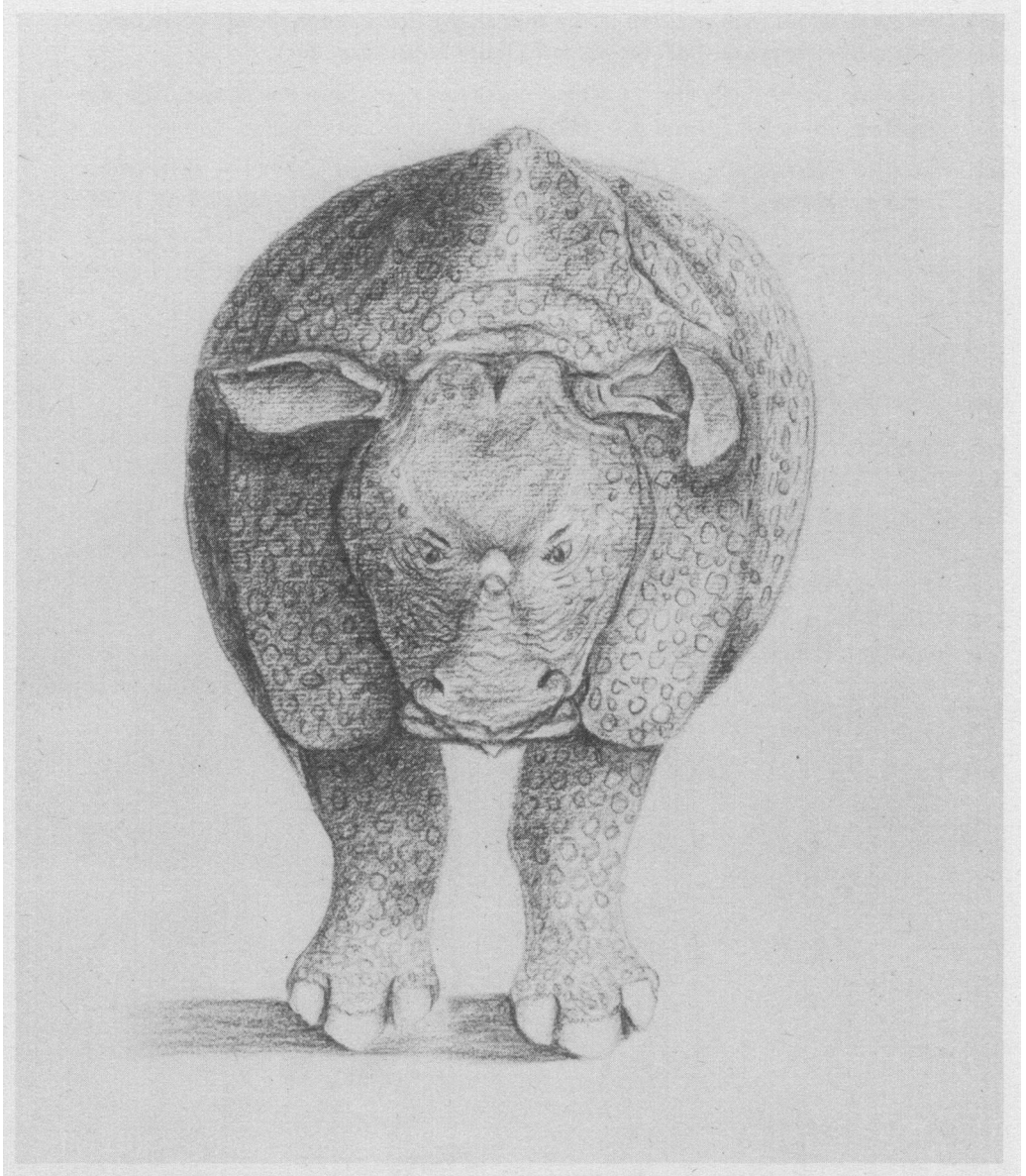


Figure 4. Front view of the London-rhinoceros, a red chalk drawing by Parsons (5.8.).

- 5.10 Hind-view, outline only (fig. 3). Part of the head, with right ear, is visible. In pencil. (DC 9)
- 5.11 Hind-view, finished drawing. Similar to 5.10 (i.e. without the penis). (DC 4)
- 5.12 Sheet with drawings of the rhinoceros's penis and a side-view of its head. (DC 19)
- 5.13 Sheet with drawings of the penis⁸, a side-view of a leg, and the hooves seen from above and below. (DC 20)



Figure 5. The first state of Carwitham's engraving made in 1739 (5.17.).

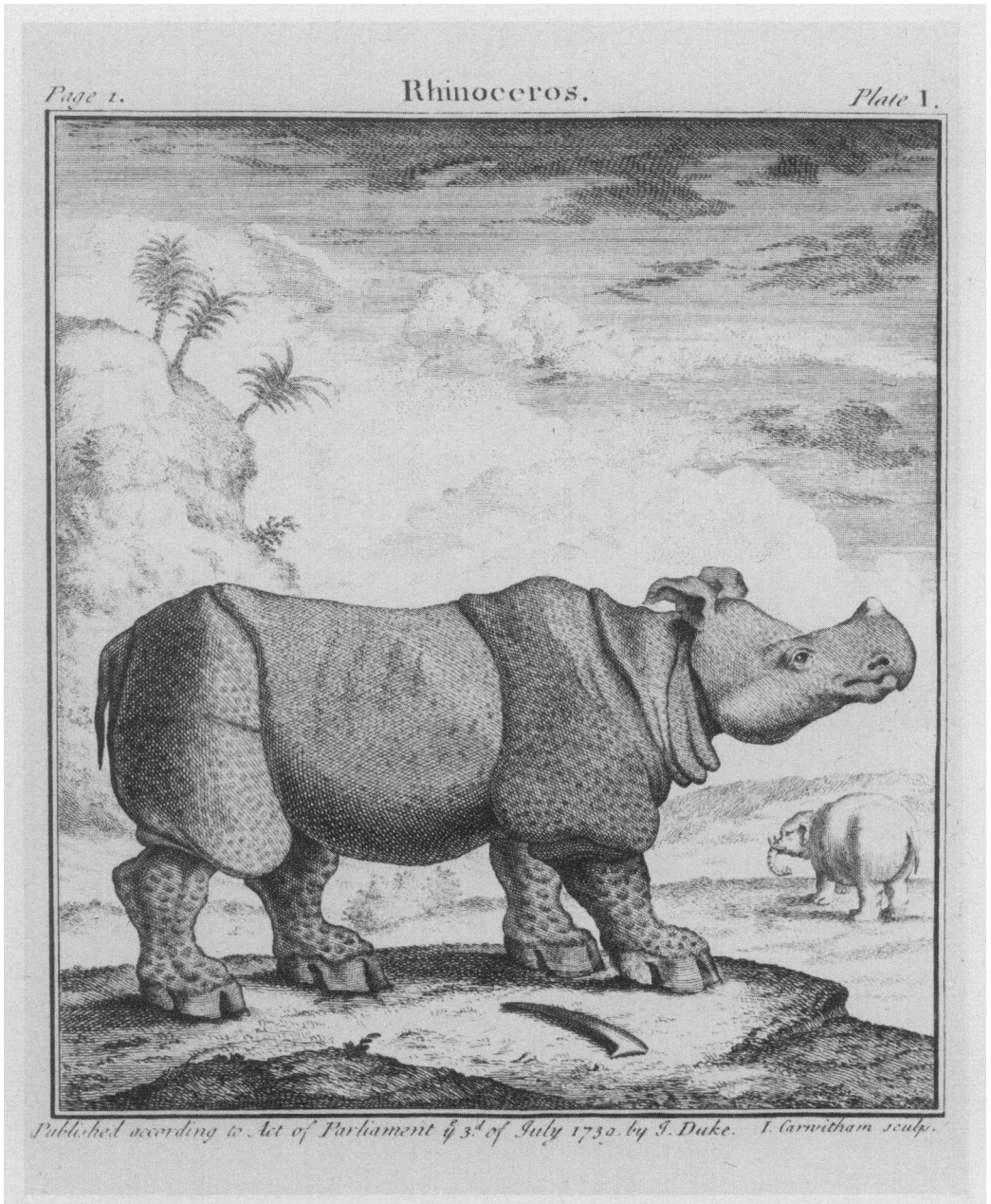


Figure 6. Carwitham's second state with altered head-region (5.18).

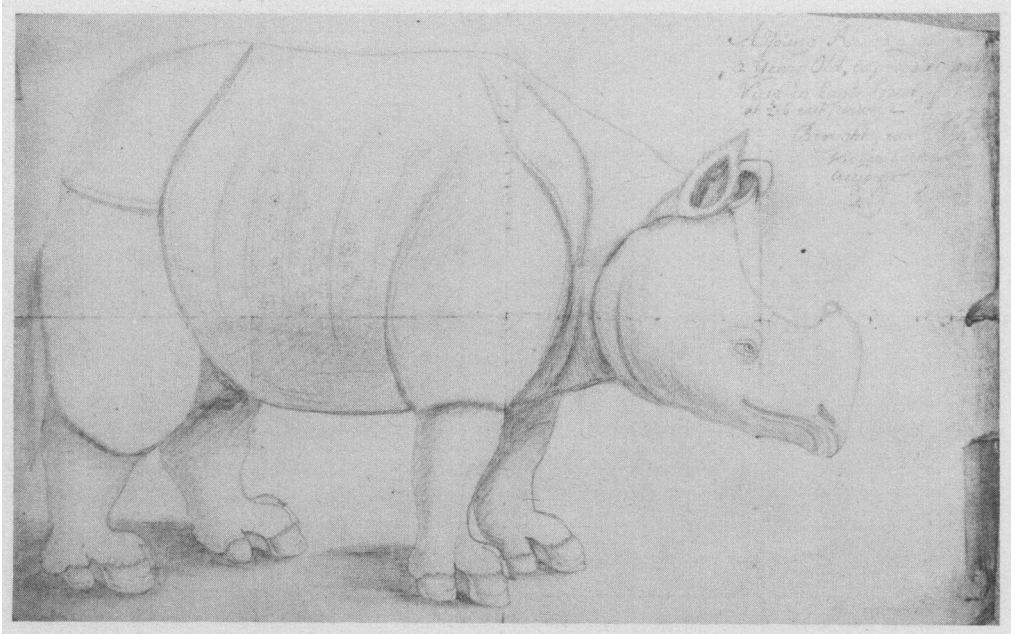


Figure 7. An unsigned pencil drawing of the rhinoceros in London in 1739. Note the damaged left ear (5.19.).

B. Engravings based on the Parsons Drawings

5.14 Engraving entitled 'PINOKEPOC – An Exact Figure of the Rhinoceros That is now to be seen in London. Inscrib'd to Humffreyes Cole Esq. Chief of the Hon.ble East India Company's Factory at Patna in the empire of the great Mogul for the favour he has done the curious in sending it over to England. Publish'd October 10, 1739.'

The rhinoceros is shown in side-view, similar to 5.3. In his collection, Parsons remarked about it: 'This was engraved by Mr. VanderGucht from a drawing which I made at the request of Doctor Douglas. ... It has been subject to some alterations by the Doctors command, which makes it differ from my drawing, and the painting I made also afterwards from the animal.'

- a. Coloured copy, text largely cut off. Rhinoceros faces left. (DC 43)
- b. Black-and-white copy, without text. Animal faces left. (PC 15)
- c. Coloured copy (but colours differ from a.). Without text. Rhinoceros faces right, unlike all other copies of the engraving that are known. (DC 44)

The Hunterian library in Glasgow has a large number of uncoloured copies of the print. The copy from Banks's library (Dryander 1796: 65) is in the Owen Collection (British Museum (Natural History), fol.323a). Petrus Camper had one, possibly presented to him by William Hunter (now in the library of the University of Amsterdam, mss. room, sign. AX). The British Museum (Natural History) has another bound with Duke's brochure of 1739 instead of Carwitham's plate (see 5.17). On it is handwritten: 'Ja. Parsons M.D. ad vivum delin. Londini 1739. Ger. van der Gucht sculps.' The poster was thus engraved by Gerard van der Gucht (1696–1776) in 1739.

- 5.15 Engraving showing half side/front view and half side/hind view of the rhinoceros, exactly like plate 2 in Parsons (1743). Without the inscription 'Phil. Trans. no.470.' (PC 14 L)
Lit.: Rookmaaker, 1973, fig.5.
- 5.16 Engraving of a side-view of the rhinoceros. In all details similar to plate 1 in Parsons (1743) except the horn which is much longer, and without the inscription 'Phil. Trans. no.470.' The plate was engraved by J. Mynde. The 1739-rhinoceros never had such a large horn; the reason for this exaggeration is unknown. (PC 16 L)
- C. Other plates of the 1739 rhinoceros.
- 5.17 Engraving by I. Carwitham, 1st edition (fig. 5). The caption reads: 'Published according to Act of Parliament the 3d of July 1739 by J. Duke. I. Carwitham sculp.' The plate belongs to a small booklet (12 pp.) about the rhinoceros, possibly by J. Duke. Parsons, in his collection, remarks: '... the above Print, which was published as a specimen of a *Natural History of four footed animals* with a pamphlet in quarto bearing that title; but nothing more of the said promis'd history has ever since appear'd. The figure was much blamed as it is indeed full of errors, which made the engraver publish a second edition with alterations about the head which has made it much worse than the former.' (PC 17)
Lit.: Cole, 1953: 351, who states that the plate was based on the 1684 rhinoceros which is unlikely. The source he mentions (J. Carwitham, *Various kinds of floor decorations*, London, 1739) does not contain the rhinoceros engraving.
- 5.18 Engraving by I. Carwitham, 2nd edition (fig. 6). The same caption as 5.17. The shape of the animal is similar but the head and the neck are changed. Parsons wrote: '... it appears he has broken the face of the animal, and given him a pair of dogs ears; whether out of malice we cannot say.' The DC contains a complete copy of the pamphlet with Carwitham's second edition. (DC 45, PC 19)
- 5.19 Pencil drawing (fig.7). In the upper right hand corner is written (but the part near the edge is partly worn off): 'A young rhinoceros [about] 2 years old, exposed to public view in Eagle Street, the 15th [?] 1739, at 2.6 each person. Brought from Bengal. His ear broken by accident.' The left ear is indeed shown to be damaged. The artist is unknown and the drawing does not seem to be based on any other. The initials that appear beneath the text are unfamiliar. (DC 32)
- 5.20 Ink-drawing of a rhinoceros from the right side. The artist is unknown and it is not indicated what the figure represents. In the absence of other evidence we may assume that it is an illustration of the 1739 rhinoceros. (DC 26)

6 The rhinoceros of 1741

In July 1741 a young female Indian rhinoceros arrived in Holland. With its owner, Douwe Mout (van der Meer), it toured through Europe between 1746 and some time in the early 1750s (Clarke, 1974: 116–120; Gowers, 1952; Rookmaaker, 1973: 46–56). From December 1751 through 1752 it was exhibited in London (Anonymous, 1751: 571).

- 6.1 The engraving from Edwards (1758, fig.221) showing the rhinoceros and a penis. On the plate is printed: 'The female Rhinoceros, drawn from the life in London, A.D.

1752. Published Septem. 14, 1752. Geo. Edwards delin. et sculp.' (PC 21 L)
Lit.: Rookmaaker, 1973, fig. 12.

- 6.2 Poster with the following text: 'To be seen, at the Horse and Groom in Lambeth-Marsh, the surprising, great and noble animal called RHINOCEROS alive.' A fanciful description of the animal and its talents follows, and the text ends: 'It is at present 18 Years of age, 12 feet thick, and 6000 Pounds weight.' In smaller type is added: 'The Royal Family, and the Nobility and Gentry have seen this animal with great admiration and satisfaction. This creature may be seen from eight o'clock in the morning till six in the evening, even if there is but one person at a time, so that nobody need to wait, at one shilling the first place, and sixpence the second. It is to be seen in a tent, where there is a way for coaches to come up.'

Similar posters were sold with the animal on the continent, but this is the only one with an English text. '18 years' would date the poster to around 1756 (the animal was 2–3 years old in 1741). This is in itself not impossible but no other evidence of a rhinoceros in London in 1756 is known, while it is certain that one was shown there in 1751–52. I consider the rhinoceros's age as given on the poster to be incorrect. (PC 28)

7 Rhinoceros specimens in London

The DC has ten red chalk drawings by Parsons depicting rhinoceros horns, skulls, and skin. Some of these may have been shown by Douglas at a meeting of the Royal Society on 28 June 1739 where rhinoceros horns were discussed (Parsons, 1743: 527). At the meeting of 21 June 1739 Martin Folkes showed a hoof and a piece of skin from his own museum. Douglas on that occasion received the skin of a young rhinoceros and a horn from the Royal Society's Museum to do some experiments on them (Journal Book of the Royal Society, XVI: 454).

- 7.1 Skin, left side view. (DC 14)
7.2 Skin, left side view, in a position different from 7.1. Mouth open, horn small, tail stretched. (DC 18)
7.3 Skin, seen from above. Ears missing. (DC 15)
7.4 Skin, seen from above. Front part unfinished. (DC 16)
7.5 Skin, outstretched, seen from the inside. (DC 17)

Although it is hard to be sure, all drawings seem to be made from one skin which was unstuffed. Nos. 7.1, 7.3, and 7.5 clearly show the 'saddle' formed by the shoulder-folds, characteristic of the Javan rhinoceros, *Rhinoceros sondaicus* Desmarest, 1822. The drawings show a young specimen (some months old), probably a male since the very beginning of a horn can be seen; females of this species do not have any real horns, only small humps at most (Hoogerwerf, 1970: 76–77; Groves, 1971: 243–245; opposed by Schenkel & Schenkel, 1969: 130).

Which specimen was depicted? The skin in the museum of the Royal Society was known to Douglas. It was described by Grew (1681: 29): 'The skin of a young rhinoceros, composed indifferently of the shape of the animal. . . . The lower part of his forehead and

snout cover'd with a kind of hard crust, his ears naked and smooth. . . . The animal being very young, had no horn, nor so much as any sign of it. . . . but the cloven-feet in the same picture [*i.e.* Piso's, 8.1] I do not find here, peradventure the skin not being well taken off the feet.'

This seems to fit the skin on the drawings. Only one of them (7.1) shows the feet clearly and the ears indeed appear to be naked, most unusual for a rhinoceros. Although none of these arguments is conclusive, it is likely that Parsons made the drawings from the skin of an infant *Rhinoceros sondaicus* in the Royal Society's collection. In 1781 this museum was transferred to the British Museum (Stimson, 1968: 177) but few of its specimens are still in existence (Whitehead, 1970: 56).

- 7.6 Skull of an infant of the genus *Rhinoceros* (Groves, *in litt.*), seen from above. Parsons (1743: 529–530) saw in Hans Sloane's museum, 'the bones of the head' of the rhinoceros. The horn 'of this animal, being very young, does not rise from its rough basis above an inch, is black and smooth at the tip, like those of the ox-kind, and rugged downwards.' The specimen's youth and the shape of the horn could indicate that Parsons described the skull he drew. (DC 12)
- 7.7 Skull with two large horns, the second smaller than the anterior one. The skull belongs to a *Rhinoceros unicornis* judging by the presence of canine teeth and the shape of the occiput. If this is correct, then the presence of *two* horns is strange. Either the second horn was added in the drawing, or the animal really had two horns. Supernumerary horns, on any part of the body, are a common feature of rhinoceroses but usually they do not grow to any length. Hill (1958) described an abnormal horn, of unstated length, in an Indian rhinoceros 'between the base of the normal horn and the forehead – approximately midway.' It cannot be decided whether the second horn in this specimen was real or an artefact. It is not known where Douglas or Parsons saw this skull. (DC 13)
- 7.8 Short rhinoceros horn. An adult, well-worn specimen belonging to the genus *Rhinoceros* (Groves, *in litt.*). It could have been in any London collection. (DC 11)
- 7.9 Long rhinoceros horn. It belongs to an African species. Since some of the basal part is missing, identification is difficult. It could have been in any London collection. (DC 11)
- 7.10 Two horns attached to each other by a piece of skin and crossing one another. Beside them, their underside is depicted. These figures were used in Parsons (1743, pl. 3 figs. 8, 9). The horns probably belonged to the black rhinoceros, *Diceros bicornis*, and were in the collection of Hans Sloane. Cromwell Mortimer, visiting Sloane's manor house at Chelsea in 1748, saw them on one of the walls (Brooks, 1954: 198, 200). Sloane (1749: 118) had received them from Charles Lockyer, from the south-east coast of Africa. The anterior horn was 25 inches long, the posterior one was somewhat smaller (Parsons 1743: 541). Parsons (*loc. cit.*) suggested that the horns had not grown crossed in the natural state, but he was not sure. However, the horns were 'tied together across, the better to preserve the short skin that connected them' (Sloane, *loc. cit.*). Otherwise they would have been very remarkable: only one rhinoceros with crossed horns is known, *viz.* the black rhinoceros that was photographed in 1907 in the Central Park Zoo, New York, an abnormality that may have been due to life in captivity (Reynolds, 1970, fig. 11).

According to Zukowsky (1964:17) these horns belonged to the so-called *keitloa* type since both horns are of almost equal length. The name *keitloa* Smith, 1836 is a synonym of *Diceros bicornis bicornis* (L., 1758) according to Groves (1967: 271–273). Horns are not a good taxonomic character below genus level (Groves, 1971). (DC 21)

8 Miscellaneous

- 8.1 Piso (1658: 51). Figure belonging to the account by Bontius. It shows a one-horned rhinoceros, but it is no more than a caricature. Bontius (1596–1631) lived on Java from 1627 until his death and he often encountered rhinoceroses there (Piso, *loc.cit.*; Bontius *et al.* 1694: 132–136). In the figure the features of the Javan rhinoceros, *R. sondaicus* are hardly recognisable. It was probably added to the account (by Piso?). The skull beneath it, in the original publication, can be identified as *R. sondaicus*. (DC 27, PC 7)
Lit.: Parsons, 1743:526; Sody, 1959: 127; Cole, 1953: 348; Whitehead, 1973: 196 note; Coste, 1946.
- 8.2 Chardin (1711, pl. 40). Engraving of a rhinoceros that was seen at Ispahan, Persia⁹. The plate is reasonably good, and certainly after life. (DC 30 – a pencil drawing after Chardin)
Lit.: Parsons, 1743: 526; Cole, 1953: 351; Coste, 1946: 123, fig.10.
- 8.3 Engraving with the rhinoceros copied from Chardin (8.2), published (according to the caption) on 22 October 1739. The largely incorrect text is as follows: 'The true and Exact Portraiture of the Rhinoceros, which was brought over into England in the Year 1685, and after some stay in London was carried to the University of Oxford; where by the over Curiousness of some Gentlemen in trying the utmost strength of that Creature loaded it with so many sacks of Corn till it sunk under the Burthen and broke its Back. – Copied from a Drawing taken from the Life.' Parsons (in the PC) remarked: '[it was] published by a printseller in Maiden Lane, Southampton Street, Covent Garden, when the Rhinoceros was shew'd in Eagle Street, Red Lyon Square in June 1739 notwithstanding the fabulous inscription exhibited with the print.' This plate is an outrageous fake; the figure is taken from Chardin but is said to be a representation of the 1684 rhinoceros, while it was sold with yet another specimen in 1739. The experiment in Oxford recorded in the text is therefore unlikely to be true. Enquiries in Oxford failed to reveal any supporting evidence (Davies, *in litt.*). (DC 29, PC 20)
- 8.4 Persian drawing from Kempfer's collection, copied in red chalk by Parsons. Parsons annotation reads 'From a Persian drawing in the collection of Dr Kempfer, from one he saw alive in the garden of the king of Persia at Ispahan, ann. 1682'. It is a primitive figure. The original drawing is in an album of Persian drawings (p.029), once presented to Kempfer, now in the Department of Oriental drawings of the British Museum. (PC 11)
- 8.5–7 Three engravings by Petrus Camper showing head and skull of a black rhinoceros, *Diceros b. bicornis*. They are similar to the plates published in Camper (1780, pls.5–7; 1782, pls.1–3) but they are black and the figure-numbers and the measurements are lacking. All three are inscribed, 'P. Campero. To Dr William Hunter'. They

- must have been added to the DC by Hunter. Camper sent these plates to William Hunter, together with a letter dated 24 March 1773 (Glasgow University Museum), in which he writes: 'I have the honour to offer you the plates. The first has a scale of Rhyndland measure. They are all drawn by myself.' (DC 22, 23, 24)
- 8.8 Kolb 1727, I, plate opposite p.190, copied in red chalk (by Parsons?). This plate of a black rhinoceros was engraved by Jan Wandelaar (1690–1759) and was made for the Dutch edition of Kolb's book. (DC 25, PC 4)
Lit.: Rookmaaker, 1976, pl.1.
- 8.9 Folder entitled 'Rhinoceros. Sketches from Wandelaar, with Dr Douglas's account of them. From Dr Hunter's Museum.' It contains one sheet (two pages) of notes by Douglas, mainly on his conversation with Wandelaar. The drawings on a second sheet were made by Wandelaar from a stuffed young rhinoceros in the *ambulacrum* of the Leiden botanical gardens, brought from the East Indies in 1677.
It was recently discovered (Brock, *in litt.*) that Douglas visited Holland both in 1734 and again from October 1739 until some time in 1740. Since it is likely that he first became interested in the rhinoceros in 1739, his notes on the discussion with Wandelaar and the latter's drawings probably date from this second visit in 1739, and not from 1734 as I surmised earlier (Rookmaaker, 1976: 88). (DC 1a)
Lit.: Rookmaaker, 1976: 88, pl.2. Part of the text is there reproduced.
- 8.10 Engraving of an elephant, entitled: 'The great elephant brought into England and landed August the third 1675. Printed and sold at the White Horse without Newgate. John Dunstall fecit.' (DC 28)
- 8.11–13 Three engravings (1767) after drawings by Petrus Camper (labelled Tab.I, II and III) showing deformed human embryos. Camper had intended to publish these plates in a book '*De monstros*' which, however, never appeared (Visser, *in litt.*). (DC, following p.46)

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NOTES

¹ The date 24 June 1739 which appears in the printed paper by Parsons (1743: 527) is a printing error. The original manuscript for that article (library Royal Society, I.&P.IV.304) mentions the correct date, 21 June.

² An oil painting of James Parsons by Benjamin Wilson, dated 1762, is in the National Portrait Gallery, London (no.560).

³ The date 1760 appears on the title page of the volume. In an early edition of Buffon (1754: 179–181), however, the note which De Mours added to the translation is reproduced. Clearly Buffon had seen this French translation, presumably in print.

⁴ The unoriginal nature of the Meijer figures was mentioned by Otto (1788: 176).

⁵ Nieuhof's book went through many editions and translations. The few that I saw all differ from each other in the words written on the rhinoceros plate. The one in the PC resembles that in the Dutch edition (1693: 151). Parsons (in the PC) quotes the book's title in French, but more words are written on the plate in the French translation of 1665 (:93). The same is true for a German edition (1666: 151) which is, moreover, the reverse of the other two.

⁶ The plate in question is in the Paris edition of Thevet's book (1557). Another version of it, likewise dated 1558, was published by Christophe Plantin at Antwerp. The plate in the latter has a different rhinoceros, much more clearly based on Dürer, and it is less well executed.

⁷ A similar side-view by Parsons is in the Sloane Collection (British Museum), 5261 no.47. The rhinoceros faces left, both ears are shown, and fore-legs apart. In lower right-hand corner: 'IPs MD del.'

⁸ In the Sloane collection, 5261 no.49, there is also a drawing of the animal's penis (similar to the one published by Parsons, 1743, pl.3 fig.3, but unlike 5.12 and 5.13). Again (see note 7), it bears the inscription: 'IPs MD del.' The same collection, 5261 no.48, contains a drawing by Parsons of the hooves from above and below, similar to 5.13 (which is more crudely done) and Parsons (1743, pl.3 fig.1).

⁹ In the 16th and 17th centuries rhinoceroses were not infrequently seen in captivity in the Near East (Lach 1970: 168, note 254). Rauwolf saw one in Aleppo in 1575 (Dannenfeldt 1968: 143), Chardin another some time later (see 8.4).

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